

Advent: Hope

Bay Point Church – First Sunday of Advent Sermon Study Guide “Hope, Joy, and the Attitude of Christ” (Rev. Buddy Royston)

Sermon Theme

Advent begins with **hope** — the confident expectation that God keeps His promises and His light breaks into darkness. The message calls us to cultivate an **attitude of gratitude**, find **joy in trials**, adopt **Christ’s humble mindset**, and experience God’s peace through prayer and right thinking.

Key Scriptures

- **Isaiah 9:2** (NIV): “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” (Advent candle of hope)
- **Psalms 100** (selected): “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness... Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his... For the Lord is good and his love endures forever.”
- **James 1:2-4** (NIV): “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”
- **Philippians 2:5-8** (NIV): “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant...”
- **Philippians 4:4-9** (NIV): “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!... Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally... whatever is true, whatever is noble... think about such things.”

Main Points

- **Advent Hope:** God’s people have always waited expectantly for the Messiah. We light the candle of hope and remember that light dawns in darkness. Hope is active trust in God’s faithfulness.
- **Joy in Hardship:** Trials test and strengthen our faith. Choose to “count it joy” because endurance leads to maturity. God is good even when circumstances are not.
- **Attitude of Gratitude & Humility:**
 - Thank God for healing, provision, guidance, peace, and His presence.
 - Adopt Christ’s mindset: humble yourself, serve others, put their interests first, and love as He loved.
 - Surrender daily — run *to* God, not from challenges.

- **Peace Through Prayer & Focus:**
 - Don't worry — pray about everything with thanksgiving.
 - Fix your thoughts on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable.
 - God's peace will guard your heart and mind.

Practical Applications

- Practice rejoicing and thanking God daily, especially in difficulties.
- Pray for others boldly (healing, needs) and show Christ's love to strangers and family.
- During this Advent season, let hope, joy, and peace overflow to those around you.

Questions for Further Thought & Discussion

1. What "trial" are you facing right now? How can you begin to "consider it pure joy" (James 1:2-4) and trust God to produce perseverance and maturity?
2. In what relationships or situations do you need to adopt "the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5) — humility, servanthood, and putting others first?
3. How can you practically "rejoice always," pray instead of worry, and focus your thoughts on good things (Philippians 4:4-9) this week to experience God's transcendent peace?

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him (Romans 15:13). **He shall reign forevermore!***